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ABSTRACT

Minorities are underrepresented in the departments of education at institutions of higher learning. This underrepresentation is due to more attractive opportunities in other fields, rigorous promotion and tenure requirements, and isolation of minority professors. This paper asserts that cultivation of mentoring relationships between senior members of faculty and faculty of color can lead to the increased retention of minority professors. After defining mentoring, the paper examines formal and informal mentoring relationships. Formal mentorships are managed and sanctioned by the organization. Informal mentorships are spontaneous relationships that develop without external involvement. Some of the many functions of a mentor include: providing training, stimulating knowledge acquisition, providing emotional support and encouragement, inculcating by example a value system and professional work ethic, providing visibility and exposure, and modeling excellence in teaching. Mentoring may be same- or cross-race. In cross-race relationships, mentors should be aware of their basic beliefs and world views, understand cultural differences surrounding perceptions of one's own power status, and recognize differences in communication and conflict management styles. Though research highlights the benefits of mentoring relationships for proteges, these relationships may also benefit the mentors and organizations in which they work. (Contains 20 references.) (SM)

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Mentoring Faculty of Color

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Mentoring Faculty Of Color

Abstract

There is under-representation of minorities in the departments of education of institutions of higher learning. There are many ways to explain this under-representation. Some of these are: more attractive opportunities in other fields, rigorous promotion and tenure requirements, and isolation of minority professors. We argue that the cultivation of mentoring relationships between senior members of faculty and faculty of color will lead to the increased retention of minority professors. This presentation defines mentorship, lists functions of a mentor, includes information on cross-cultural mentoring, and reviews selected literature on the outcomes of mentoring relationships.

Mentoring Faculty of Color

The rapidly increasing number of people of color in the US necessitates that educational institutions and businesses respond to the emerging dynamics of cultural and linguistic diversity. Since 1960, institutions of higher learning have have earned a reputation of accommodating diversity. However, it is now ironic that departments of education in academia have under-representation of minorities. There are many ways to explain this under-representation. Some of these are: more attractive opportunities in other fields, rigorous promotion and tenure requirements, and isolation of minority professors. We argue that the cultivation of mentoring relationships between senior members of faculty and faculty of color will lead to the increased retention of minority professors. As many believe, graduate education hardly prepares new faculty for their jobs. And, the "osmosis" method of preparing faculty is inadequate because academic stakes are too high (Frongia, 1995).

This presentation aims to: (1) define mentorship; (2) discuss types of mentorship; (3) list functions of a mentor; (4) cover essential information for cross-cultural mentoring; (4) and briefly review selected literature on the outcomes of mentoring.

Mentoring-A Definition

Researchers have attempted to define mentoring. There are several definitions of mentoring in the field of higher education, psychology and organizational behavior. There is no single comprehensive definition of mentoring. Blackwell (1989) defined mentoring as a process by which persons of superior rank, special achievements and prestige instruct, counsel, guide, and facilitate the intellectual and/or career development of persons identified as protégés. Mentoring relationships-intense, close, interactive and quite often immensely complex may affect patterns similar to those found in parenting such as authority, respect, intimacy, and trust. Moore and Amey (1988) defined mentoring as a form of professional socialization whereby a

more experienced individual acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and patron of less experienced protégé. The aim of the relationship is the further development and refinement of the protégé's skills, abilities, and understanding.

According to Fagenson (1989), a mentor is some one in a position of power who looks out for you, or gives you advice, or brings your accomplishments to the attention of other people who have power. And, Ollian et al. (1988) ascertained that a mentor is a senior member of the profession or organization who shares values, provides emotional support, career counseling, information and advice, professional and organizational sponsorship, and facilitates access to key organizational and professional networks. Mentorship requires direct interaction between the mentor and the protégé. Mentoring involves the exchange of information beyond that available from procedural manuals or college catalogues (Jacobi, 1991).

Types of Mentoring Relationships

There are two types of mentoring relationships. These are: formal and informal. Formal mentorships are managed and sanctioned by the organization. They are viewed as a part of planned career development of junior managers and professionals. Mentor and protégé are joined together in the mentoring relationship by random assignment, committee assignment or mentor selection based on protégé files. Formal mentorships involve a certain degree of pressure. The mentor and protégé may be required to participate in the mentorship program simply because of their respective positions. The formal mentors may or may not be motivated to help their protégé. They may not consider their protégé as worthy of their time and attention. Moreover, formal mentorships require a longer adjustment period simply because mentors and protégés need to get to know one another. Formal mentoring relationships tend to last between 6 months and a year with infrequent contact, often dictated by a contractual agreement (Chao, Waltz, and Gardner, 1992).

Informal mentorships, on the other hand, are not managed, structured, or formally recognized by the organizations. Generally, informal mentorships are spontaneous relationships that develop without external involvement from the organization. They grow out of interactions between junior and senior organizational members. From these interactions, protégés may prove themselves to be worthy of extra attention that a mentorship would necessitate. Informal mentorships develop because of a desire on the part of mentor to help the protégé and a willingness of the protégé to be open to advice and assistance from the mentor. (Chao et al., 1992). Additionally, mentors tend to select as protégés persons who are of the same gender and who share with themselves a number of social and cultural attributes or background characteristics such as race, ethnicity, religion and social class. Because minorities are presently underrepresented in faculty positions, such practices result in the under-selection of minorities as protégés (Blackwell, 1989).

Functions of a Mentor

Mentors perform multitude of functions for their protégés. These functions can be labeled as psychosocial and as career related. According to Kram (1983) and Jacobi (1991), following are the major functions of a mentor:

- Providing training
- Stimulating the acquisition of knowledge
- Including the protégé into work groups
- Providing emotional support and encouragement
- Helping the protégé develop coping strategies during periods of turmoil
- Socializing protégés regarding the role requirement, expectations, and organizational imperatives or demands of the profession.

- Creating an understanding of the educational bureaucracy and the ways one can maneuver within the system.
- Inculcating by example a value system and a professional work ethic
- Providing informal instructions about demeanor, etiquette, collegiality and day-to-day interpersonal relations.
- Helping the protégé build self-confidence, heighten self-esteem and strengthen motivation to perform at one's greatest potential.
- Defending and protecting the protégé, correcting mistakes, and demonstrating techniques of avoiding unnecessary problems.
- Assigning responsibilities that could enhance career development.
- Teaching ropes of the profession.
- Providing visibility and exposure.
- Providing access to resources.
- Modeling excellence in teaching.
- Collaborating on research projects.
- Modeling faculty-student relationships.
- Observing teaching
- Strategizing through promotion and tenure process.
- Offering soundboard for frustrations.

Knowledge for Cross-Cultural Mentoring

Mentoring may be same-race or cross race. There is research that shows that same race mentoring relationships provide more psychosocial support than the cross-race relationships. However for cross-race or cross-cultural mentoring relationships, the mentor needs to be aware of the following points that can affect performance.

First, mentors should be aware of their basic beliefs, their view of the world and the manner in which these variables affect their perceptions. The positivist/postpositivist view assumes that there is one reality and that is knowable within limits of probability. Interpretive and constructivist view suggests that there are multiple natures of reality and that they are socially constructed. Wheras the emancipatory approach holds that there are multiple realities shaped by social, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values and experiences. The emancipatory approach originated because of dominant White male perspectives. Mentors must not assume similarity between their own workplace experiences and those of their protégés of color. Conversations between mentors and protégés will enable both parties to understand differential workplace treatment and expectations (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001).

Second, there is a cultural difference surrounding the perceptions of one's power status. Some cultures maintain strict boundaries between an individual of high power status and an individual of low power status. In low-power distance cultures such as those of European descent, there is limited dependence of subordinates on their superiors, little emotional distance, and a greater degree of interdependence. In low- power distance cultures, subordinates readily and comfortably approach and confront their superiors (Hofsted, 1980).

On the other hand, in high-power distance cultures, such as Latinos and Asian Americans, positions of power and status carry a lot of weight. Therefore, in these cultures, a person who perceives his/her power status to be low may demonstrate unwillingness to participate in debates and discussions that suggest that they are questioning the authority of their superior (Hofstede, 1980; Knouse 1992).

Third, cultural differences can also be interpreted along the individualism-collectivism construct. Anglo-and European based cultures tend to be more individualistic whereas African-American, Latina/Latino, and Asian Americans are more collectivist (Cox, Lobel, and McLeod, 1991). Asians and members of Latino culture tend to be more cooperative and hesitate to self

promote. Whites, by contrast tend to focus on behaviors that clearly demonstrate individual achievement. Reluctance to draw attention to oneself is often interpreted by White American managers and supervisors as inability to take on a role of authority or to be a strong leader (Carnevale and Stone, 1995).

Fourth, there is difference in communication style in different cultures. Anglo Whites tend to communicate in a detached and reserved manner. They demonstrate very little affect in professional environments. For African Americans, conversation is indicative of their sincerity. Therefore, they converse in a frank and forceful manner. They give and take criticism freely. It is interesting that some research literature indicates that African Americans view the cautious and reserved style of Anglo Americans as evidence of insincerity and potential duplicity (Kochman, 1981). Asian Americans often punctuate their conversation with great respect to the other person. They approach criticism and disagreements very carefully (Kikoski and Kikoski, 1996).

Fifth, there are also cultural differences in the importance placed on relationships and the importance placed on work activities. In most White cultures, task completion is supposed to take priority over any concerns about personal relationships. In contrast, in collectivist cultures, the personal relationship predominates over the task and must be established first. For individuals of Hispanic background, it is difficult to understand the use of professionalis or work demands. It is hard for them not to interact socially with a coworker (Carnavale & Stone, 1995). African Americans also tend to focus on personal relationships. For them, socialization is an integral part of work (Kochman, 1989).

Lastly, the style of managing conflict varies in different cultural groups. For instance African Americans respond to conflict with confrontational behaviors and open expression of negative emotions (Davidson, 2001). White Americans, in contrast, tend to address conflict with reserve and low affect (Brookhiser, 1991). In order to maintain courteous relations, Whites

prefer an insincere peace over a quarrel (Kochman, 1981). However, African Americans have little regard for civility at the expense of honesty and personal integrity. Asian Americans handle conflict in an accommodating manner. They place value on peace (Tanaka-Matsumi, 1995).

Outcomes of Mentoring Relationships

There is paucity of research literature that has looked at the outcomes of mentoring relationships. There are a few studies that have investigated the outcomes of mentoring on students of diverse backgrounds. Although, it is difficult to generalize this literature on faculty o color, it is worth a mention.

Beyne et al. (2002) collected data through a questionnaire from 133 protégés of diverse backgrounds. These protégés were students from six universities across the United States. Results indicated that mentoring is perceived as important for success and that neither gender nor race were perceived as critical influences on the mentoring process but that friendship, nurturance, open-mindedness, and trustworthiness are key to mentoring relationships.

Chao et al. (1992) looked at the outcomes of mentoring relationships in alumni from a large Mid-western university. Findings showed that protégés who were in informal mentorships received more career related support from their mentors and higher salaries than protégés in formal relationships. For all outcome variables, protégés in informal relationships reported more favorable outcomes than non-mentored individuals.

Queralt (1992) reported that academics with mentors had a significant higher level of career development than academics without mentors in terms of publication, grant and leadership status, academic rank, yearly gross income, and job/career satisfaction.

Wilson, Pereira, & Valentine (2002) surveyed social work faculty about their perceptions of mentoring in their first years as faculty members. Results indicated that new social work

faculty believe mentoring relationships provide them with multiple benefits including improved teaching and research performance. Data also suggested that programs must be carefully developed and supported if protégés, mentors, and their organizations are to fully realize these benefits.

Although, the above literature highlights the benefits of the mentoring relationship for protégés, mentoring relationships may also positively influence mentors and organizations in which these relationships thrive (Wilson, et al., 2002). Mentoring provides the mentors with an opportunity to fulfill generative needs by passing on wisdom and developing their sense of competency and self-worth (Kram, 1985). Erikson defined generativity as a positive trait of psychosocial development.

Summary

In the institutions of higher learning, there is under-representation of faculty of color, especially, in the departments of education. We argue that faculty of color be mentored. It is likely to lead to their increased numbers and increased retention. As shown in Figure 1, this paper includes definition of mentoring, types of mentoring, functions of a mentor, outcomes of mentoring relationships and some tips on cross-cultural mentoring. In cross-cultural mentoring, it is important to be aware of differential work experiences and expectations, variance in communication styles, variance in conflict management styles, variance in perceptions of power status, and variance in attaching importance to relationships at work place.

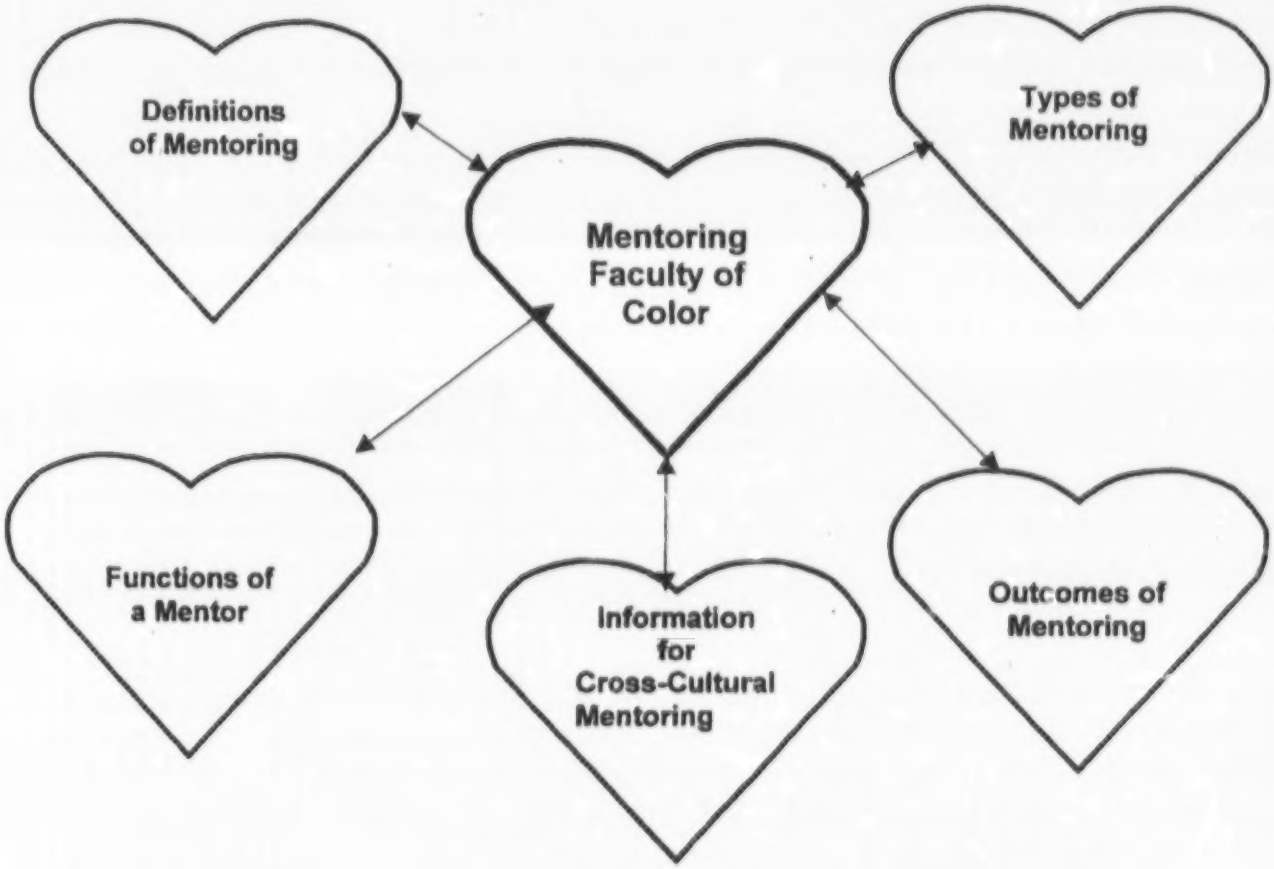

Figure 1. Mentoring

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